

# FIRST STEP TAKEN TOWARD CHEAPER GAS.

## Aldermen Appoint a Committee to Inquire into Municipal Ownership.

Resolution to That End Adopted by the  
Board Without a Dissent-  
ing Vote.

This Time, They Say, the Agitation Is in Earnest—The  
Journal's Course Commended by  
Consumers.

The first step toward securing municipal control of New York's gas supply was taken yesterday at the regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen. It was a unanimous step, every Alderman present lending it his hearty support, and if the Legislature backs up the efforts of the Board of Aldermen it will not be long before dollar gas will be an actuality.

The credit for having made the first move in the fight for cheap gas belongs to Alderman W. M. K. Olcott, of the Twenty-

with all hope that competition would reduce the price of gas. "We want the Legislature," he said, "to give us power to subpoena witnesses, and when we get it, I will guarantee that we secure such information that will prevent any member of the Legislature from voting against the municipal ownership of gas works by New York."

In Earnest This Time.

"My course in this matter is approved by the heads of all city departments, including the Mayor, who called me downstairs immediately after I had introduced the

ing, School, Tail, Wines, Woodward and Wund, voting aye, and Aldermen Ware, Olcott, Hall and President Jeroloman, no.

The resolution is finally passed gives the use of the streets to the consumers' company for a cash consideration of \$15,000 and 30 cents per lineal foot of main or pipe that it lays. It compels the company to expend at least \$20,000 a year in laying pipes and to furnish fuel gas at a heat unit of at least 550, which may be raised to 500 at the option of the Board of Aldermen. For this gas not more than 40 cents per thousand is to be charged ordinary consumers, and not more than 25 cents per thousand to the city or large manufacturing concerns.

The company must be ready to furnish

his endeavor, but made no open fight for cheaper gas.

**Boston.**

Boston, Mass., Dec. 8.—The story of the fight for dollar gas in Boston is a short one. Nathan Matthews, Jr., who was Mayor three years ago, petitioned the Board of Gas and Electric Light Commissioners, a board created by the Legislature, to reduce the price of illuminating gas to \$1 a thousand. Petitions of similar nature were also sent to the Board by consumers. The Board gave a public hearing and then ordered the reduction.

The newspapers were on the side of the consumers, and an energetic protest was put in the contest and they can hardly be

ing the price of gas at 60 cents a thousand and requiring the gas companies to come to that figure by a given date. The gas companies fought, and declared they could not make money at that figure. There were special hearings on the subject in which General Meyer assumed the star role, and the gas companies brought experts from far and near to testify that it cost more than 60 cents a thousand to make gas. At last the fight got so hot that the companies made a compromise, agreeing to charge only 50 cents and to pay a slight percentage of earnings into the city treasury. Lawsuits which had been brought by the gas companies were dismissed, and the eighty-cent rate prevails now. The press of the city without ex-

**ALDERMEN GO ON RECORD.**

All Favor Cheaper Gas, and Many Support a Plan for City Ownership.

**President Jeroloman**—I certainly am in favor of Mr. Olcott's resolution, and believe a thorough investigation should be made. So far as the proposition to have the city own its gas plant is concerned, I am also in favor of that.

**Alderman Oakley**—Received me as being in favor of the proposed investigation and of anything that will cheapen the cost of gas.

**Alderman Brown**—Yes, I favor the resolution, and I hope to see some benefit result from the contemplated investigation. If it is proved that the city can supply gas to the people cheaper than the companies, then I am in favor of municipal ownership.

**Alderman Kennedick**—I voted for Mr. Olcott's resolution and am in hearty sympathy with its object. If it is shown that gas can be supplied at a lower rate than is now charged I believe we should do everything in our power to bring it about.

**Alderman Schmitt**—Of course I favor the investigation and would like to see the cost of gas cheapened as much as possible. I have not thought much about the municipal ownership of a plant, but if it is shown to be a good thing I would like to see it accomplished.

**Alderman Tatt**—I favor the resolution and the investigation which will result in some benefit to the citizens of the city. I want to see the price of gas reduced to its lowest possible figure, and will do anything to accomplish this object.

**Alderman Goodman**—Anything that will cheapen the cost of gas is warmly approved and will have my support. I think the city should own its gas plant, and I voted for the resolution introduced by Mr. Olcott.

**Alderman School**—I suggested and voted for the resolution introduced by Mr. Olcott, and I believe it will result in a benefit to the city and its people.

**Alderman Ware**—I agree with every word in Mr. Olcott's resolution, and I want to see the investigation conducted in such a manner that it will relieve our people. I would like to see the cost of gas reduced to its lowest possible figure, and if the city can furnish it for less money than the present companies, then I favor municipal ownership.

**Alderman Goodwin**—Naturally, I am in favor of anything that will benefit the people of our city. I favor the city having a plant of its own.

**Alderman Woodward**—I am for anything that will prove of benefit to my constituents, and cheaper gas certainly would. There has been considerable talk about "dollar gas" lately. I would like to see the cost as low as possible.

**Alderman Clancy**—Put me down as favoring the resolution and the investigation that has been proposed.

**Alderman Windolph**—I am a believer in municipal ownership, not only of gas, but of other plants. Now that this has commenced I want to see it carried out, as I am convinced it would prove to be a blessing to the people of the city.

**Alderman O'Brien**—I can only say I favor the plan proposed by Mr. Olcott, and I voted for his resolution.

**Alderman Randall**—I believe the cost of gas can be cheapened and I want to see it accomplished. The proposition to have the city own its plant meets with my approval.

**Alderman Parker**—I will do all in my power to have the cost of gas cheapened, and if it can be done only by municipal ownership, then I favor it.

**Alderman Hall**—I favor the resolution and hope that the objects of the investigation proposed will be gained without delay.

**Alderman Murphy**—You can count on me to support anything that will reduce the price of gas.

**Alderman Lantry**—I favor the proposed investigation and believe it would be a benefit to the people if the city had its own gas plant.

### "NO PROFIT IN \$1 GAS."

Thus Speaks the President of the Equitable Company—Quality Should be Considered.

**President Keene**, of the Equitable Gas Company—New York gas is the best in the world. This should be considered as having an important bearing on the question of cheap gas. It is lower at \$1.25 than inferior dollar gas, such as is made in Chicago, Cleveland and Boston. London gas, for instance, is only from fourteen to fifteen candle power, while our New York gas is from twenty-eight to thirty-eight candle power. Look at our expenses; they are higher in every way than in other cities. We pay more here for taxes, labor, material and real estate. Our company alone has paid the city about \$100,000 for the privilege of laying down our pipes. Think of the small sum paid by the city for lighting the streets. We get but \$12 a year for lighting each street lamp all night and keeping the lamps in repair and the posts painted. We have a contract for lighting four or five thousand of these lamps. If we gave the public the same quality of gas that is supplied in Philadelphia and Chicago the people would rise in arms against us. We were the originators of cheap gas. When we began, the prices were high; we drove gas down from \$2.25 to \$1.75. We had hardly accomplished this when along came a competitor from the Legislature to investigate. The result was a still further reduction until the price was fixed at \$1.25. There is an immense loss in manufacturing and supplying gas which seems to be entirely overlooked by newspaper readers. In the neighborhood of two or three million feet of gas is manufactured in New York. In distributing this volume the losses by leakage are not only great, but the losses by people who will not pay their bills is still greater. It is not true that these losses are distributed and charged up to consumers. The companies bear all these losses. It should be said in favor of gas companies that they pay a larger proportion of taxes, all things considered, than any other corporation. There are some of the reasons why there is no great profit in making gas at present prices. Dollar gas is simply an impossibility as a business-paying enterprise. I do not believe there is a company in New York that can produce paying gas at \$1. It may be that some especially favored consumers, hotels and the like, get cheaper gas in other cities by special arrangement, but there is no evidence that gas, equal in quality of our New York product, is manufactured in other cities at \$1.

It is more convenient to the coal fields and oil wells, and labor is also cheaper out there.

**CONSUMERS WANT \$1 GAS.**

**Hotel Managers Protest Against Present Prices and Command the Journal's Course.**

**F. T. Keith**, manager Astor House—The Journal is doing the public a great service in demanding cheaper gas. I see no reason why the price should not be reduced to one dollar. The Consolidated Company in Chicago has done it, and in so doing has its heavily watered stock, its making good dividends. Several years ago gas was so high and the quality so poor that the newspapers demanded a reduction. The result was the price went down to \$1.25. In 1882 gas was \$2.25. In December, 1884, it fell to \$1.50, and the papers demanded a further reduction and got it. The news which declared they must have \$2.50 to pay dividends made good profits at \$1.25. I have no doubt that they will continue to prosper with gas at \$1. I am glad the Journal has the nerve to serve the public against these great trusts. It is a courageous thing to do, and it will have the support of the public everywhere.

**Mr. Frost**, Manager Broadway Grand Central Hotel—I not only think gas can be served at a profit for a dollar, but I believe that it can be produced for seventy-five cents, with money for the companies. The way to protect ourselves if the companies will not reduce prices is put in dynamite.

**To Cure a Cold in One Day.**

Take Hood's Sarsaparilla. It cures colds, cures the throat, cures the lungs, cures the money if it fails to cure. 25c. Advt.

# WOMEN'S WORK FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

## National Congress of Mothers Holds a Reception in New York.

New Movement Which It Is Intended to Spread Over the  
United States.

Proper Culture of Children Is the Ultimate Object of the  
Society.

TRIBUTES PAID TO MRS. BURNETT.

Washington Ladies Come to This City to  
Interest Their Sisters of  
the American Metropolitan.

Last evening at 8 o'clock the women of the National Congress of Mothers held an informal reception in the state room of the Waldorf. There were present a number of prominent people, eager to meet the women who are interesting themselves in this great new movement, which is in touch with the hearts of all women throughout the land.

The congress is now in its infancy. A most helpful of benevolent women recently joined together in Washington to work for the benefit of their own sex and of children. Next Friday, at the home of Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, in that city, the organization will be completed and officers elected.

The members are desirous that their work should not be local, but should spread over the United States. Already they have received numerous encouraging letters from persons interested in their efforts. Their object in coming to New York is to gain the co-operation of the women here who are identified with all educational, social and moral progress.

The idea of the club originated with Mrs. Theodore Burnet, of Washington. The Congress will hold its first full meeting February 10, 1907, in Washington. It is to have no class line drawn. It will endeavor to establish free kindergartens over the United States and mothers' clubs where no dues will be charged. Its prime object is the children, but they wish to reach them through the hearts and lives of the mothers. Among those present at the reception were Mrs. Adair Stevenson, Miss Morton, Mrs. William L. Wilson, Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, Mrs. Arthur H. Hays Sulzberger, Mrs. L. W. Fuller, Miss Janet Richards, all of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. M. W. Kincaid, of San Francisco, Cal.

To-morrow evening the National Congress of Mothers will hold another reception at the Waldorf. No invitations are issued, but all who are interested in this work will meet with a cordial welcome.

**Enthusiasm is Infectious.**

I have become thoroughly interested in this movement. I am sure it is but the beginning of great success. I believe all mothers will also become interested in what will help their children. Those of us who have reared children are more quickly to extend our sympathies to objects such as this club has in view. I cannot explain it now. It will develop itself in due time. The enthusiasm which Mrs. Theodore Burnet, its originator, and Mrs. Hearst, display in regard to it, is infectious. We have all caught it.

MRS. ADLAI STEVENSON.

**It's a Vital Movement.**

This seems to me a vital movement, and one best calculated to reach mothers and, through them, to benefit children, while the father's interest cannot fail to be aroused when he sees the happy result. The average mother is but indifferently equipped with knowledge for the moral, mental and physical training of childhood, and it is strange when, throughout the whole period of her education, there has been, perhaps, not a single hour in which the subject was presented to her as one most worthy of her attention? What a satire upon our boasted wisdom of to-day when dead languages and higher mathematics take precedence over that knowledge which should stand pre-eminent in a woman's education! Is it not clear that in the education of mothers we have the A, B, C of reform, and that the other letters will say themselves when these are well known? We hope to work to save the children, and this we can accomplish just so soon as mothers' hearts are awakened to all the needs of childhood.

**Tribute to Mrs. Burnet.**

I wish to pay a tribute to Mrs. Burnet, the originator of this idea, and call attention to her zeal, her energy, her broad love of humanity, especially of the little children, and the right they have to be considered in the social problem, to be well born, and well reared, and the wonderful faculty she has for interesting others in her work. As a notable example take this delegation of Washington women— all busy socially and in other lines—three of them ladies of the Cabinet—dropping everything to come here to devote themselves to promoting good in New York.

JANET RICHARDS.

**Approves Very Heartily.**

I approve very heartily of this movement. We can get the people interested in it. The more they learn about it the more important it becomes. I only wish I had known of it long ago.

Mrs. WM. L. WILSON.

**Where Its Usefulness Lies.**

I think there is a greater field for usefulness in this matter from mothers who have themselves lacked advantages in early youth, and who wish to see their children educated with all possible advantages.

EMMA MORTON.

**Books on Culture of Children.**

Our congress is bound to have a wide scope. We hope to provide for the mothers of our country books that will help them in the culture of their children. We have literature about rearing horses, pigs and cows, so why shouldn't we have some to aid mothers?

MRS. H. W. FULLER.



National Mothers' Congress in New York.

third district, who, shortly after the meeting began, introduced a resolution, given herewith, for a committee of seven to investigate the feasibility of municipal ownership of gas plants.

Alderman Benjamin E. Hall, of the Twenty-first District, spoke in favor of the resolution and cited the experience of other cities with the ownership of gas works as to what might be expected in New York's case. Wheeling, West Va., he said, had years ago purchased the gas works by an issue of bonds, and these bonds had since been paid off without assessing the people \$1 extra taxes, and at the present time they were getting the best quality of gas at 60 cents a thousand.

Richmond, Philadelphia, Detroit and Louisville were other examples cited of the benefits arising from the municipal ownership of gas works, and the case of Glasgow, Scotland, was also cited. In 1880 that city paid \$2,000,000 for the gas works, and since then has expended \$2,700,000 in improving and extending them. One-half the debt thus incurred has been paid, as well as the fixed charges and expenses, besides the putting away of a large sum for a sinking fund, and all out of the profits of the gas. During this time the price of gas has been reduced from \$1.14 per thousand to 60 cents per thousand, and at the latter price there is still a handsome profit.

The resolution was finally unanimously adopted, and President Jeroloman announced that he would name the committee this morning before 11 o'clock.

Alderman Olcott, in speaking about his resolution, said he had been considering it

for some time, and he had been moved to act by the recent action of the gas companies in consolidating and thus doing away with the old franchises. This time we are in earnest. The trouble with the attempts to secure legislation in favor of dollar gas has been, before, that the introducers of such measures have always been called off. How, I don't know. The whole city of New York will be behind the bill this time, however, and it will be passed.

How much it will cost New York to buy the plants I have been unable to learn, but this I do know, that whatever the amount, bonds could be issued, and their interest and principal paid out of the profits of gas at \$1 or less per 1,000. The committee will begin work at once and be in a position to approach the Legislature when that body meets. When it secures authority to subpoena witnesses it will be able to secure a vast amount of valuable information, and on this will have a bill for the ownership of the gas plant by the city.

**Consumers' Gas Gets a Franchise.**

Then the resolution giving the use of the streets to the Consumers' Fuel, Gas, Heat and Power Company for the purpose of laying mains and pipes for supplying fuel gas, was taken up. There was some doubt as to the Board's right to do this, as there was a question whether the temporary injunction obtained by a man named Wilcox had been vacated, but this was finally dispelled, and then set in a very pretty fight. Alderman Hall fought the resolution giving away the franchise, and at the last moment was ably seconded by President Jeroloman. The champions of the measure were Aldermen Goodman and Noonan. Alderman Hall offered amendments increasing the compensation to be paid the city, having the plant revert to the city after ten years and ordering that the franchise be put up at auction by the Controller, but all met with overwhelming defeat.

Alderman Goodman then offered a couple

of amendments, which were adopted, and the resolution finally passed by a vote of 29 to 4. Aldermen Windolph, Brown, Burke, Campbell, Clancy, Dwyer, Gentry, Goodman, Goodwin, Kennedick, Leitz, Marshall, Muh, Murphy, Noonan, Oakley, O'Brien, Parker, Randell, Robinson, Schiff, and within one year after it receives the franchise, and binds itself not to consolidate with any other corporation or company within a period of ten years.

**DOLLAR GAS ELSEWHERE.**

**How Monopolies Were Shattered and a Cheaper Illuminant Secured in Other Cities.**

**Chicago.**

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 8.—Residents of Chicago now pay \$1.05 per thousand for illuminating gas and \$1.00 for fuel gas. On the first of January, 1897, the rate will be an even dollar for both kinds. Dollar gas has been coming slowly but surely for five years. This was due to a long-headed agreement entered into five years ago by the gas companies and ex-Mayor Hempstead Washburn.

Two years ago Chicago had three gas companies—the North Side, South Side and West Side. They had a complete monopoly and kept the price all the way from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per thousand feet.

About that time the Consumers' Gas Company was organized, and by promising to buy the gas at \$1.00 per thousand, the city granted it the right to lay pipes all over town. The system was completed and the people got "dollar gas" for a time. Then the gas trust was organized, and the Consumers' went in with the rest, pushing up the price to \$1.50 again.

Five years ago Hempstead Washburn, then Mayor, set out to effect some arrange-

ment with the monopoly by which a cheaper rate could be had. It was a difficult task, but he finally succeeded in getting the trust to sign an agreement to fix the price to \$1.25 for the first year and then reduce it at the rate of five cents per annum until it reached \$1. The trust has since been broken, so far as the public knows, but the companies have lived up to their contract and with the coming new year gas will be at a rate which is considered reasonable. The Consumers' and consolidated from the examination of the companies' books that they could stand the reduction.

**Pittsburg.**

Pittsburg, Pa., Dec. 8.—This city has enjoyed dollar gas for twenty-three years, and there is so much money in it, at this price that politicians are trying to secure all the gas privileges in Allegheny County. Prior to 1871 the Pittsburg Gas Company had a monopoly of the business. The price then was \$1.00 per thousand.

In 1871 the Consolidated Company began business and the old company dropped the price to \$1.40. Then the Consolidated cut this to \$1.20 and the old company cut it 20 cents better, making the price \$1. Both companies found that big dividends could be paid at that rate, and in 1878 adopted \$1 as the permanent price. There has never been any disposition to advance it. Before the opposition company appeared in the field there was a general clamor for a reduction of rates. One paper, by agitating the formation of a new company and subscribing for a big block of its stock, was responsible for the competition.

P. J. McNulty, secretary and treasurer of the Consolidated Gas Company, said to-night: "New York should not pay more for gas than any other large city. With the improved facilities for manufacturing the illuminant and the use of the by-products that were formerly thrown away, gas can be sold at a profit at \$1 a thousand. This should be the rate in New York. I have all ways understood that it costs more to make gas there than elsewhere, but this disadvantage is overcome by the fact that it costs less than elsewhere to deliver it."

**Grand Rapids.**

Grand Rapids, Mich., Dec. 8.—The price of gas to ordinary small consumers is \$1 a thousand, and this price was made voluntarily without any fight, public agitation or competition. The gas company was organized forty years ago, and the original price was far up. With improved methods and increased production the price was gradually reduced to the present price, three or four years ago. It was the theory of the late Thomas D. Gilbert, long president of the company, that reduced price increased consumption and that the increased consumption increased the profits, and it was following on this theory that the \$1 mark was reached. While the ordinary household consumer gets his gas for \$1, the large consumers get rebates which still further reduces the price to as low as 70 cents. The company has never had a competitor, and never had a fight, and is looking for ways to further reductions in the price. The present price is the lowest of any city in the United States so far removed from the coal fields.

**Cleveland.**

Cleveland, Ohio, Dec. 8.—The fight for cheap gas in this city was taken up five or six years ago by the administration of Mayor William G. Rose, who was the first Mayor of Cleveland under the federal plan. Mayor R. E. McKensie, the present incumbent, is the third federal plan Mayor, and Robert Bice was the second. Bice is a

Democrat and Rose and McKensie are Republicans. Mayor Rose's director of law was General Ed. S. Meyer, and he led the fight on the gas companies. There are two gas companies here, one on the east side and one on the west side of the river. Both were charging \$1 a thousand for gas.

**St. Louis.**

St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 8.—The fight for cheap gas in St. Louis dates back to 1890, when the old St. Louis Gas Light Company was absorbed by the Laclede. The price at that time was \$1.50 a thousand. The continued attempts of new companies to obtain franchises and furnish dollar gas caused a further reduction to \$1.25, with ten per cent discount, if paid within ten days. The Laclede Company also made open promises to furnish dollar gas as soon as the consumption justified it. The first of last January the price was cut to \$1.10, with the usual discount, making it \$1 net. In July last the price for gas for fuel purposes was further reduced to ninety cents, with the discount. These are the present prices.

The hue and cry raised by the newspapers of the city demanding the admission of new companies into the field caused the Laclede Company to pull down its prices.

**Milwaukee.**

Milwaukee, Wis., Dec. 8.—The price of gas furnished in this city by the Milwaukee Gas Light Company, owned by a Boston syndicate, is \$1 for lighting purposes, and 80 cents for fuel purposes, providing, however, that all bills are paid before the 10th of each month. If not the price is \$1.20 for lighting and \$1.40 for fuel.

Gas is the same, but that used for fuel purposes is measured in a different meter. There has just been a reduction in the price in recent years. But some years ago, when the price was \$1.50 per thousand feet, there was much complaint by consumers. A movement was then started to take away the exclusive franchise in this city enjoyed by the syndicate and to allow competition. The syndicate was so frightened that it agreed to a reduction in price to check the agitation. Later it was made known that it had not lost business by the reduction, but that its volume of business was increasing. Investigation showed that large quantities of gas could be manufactured at a very much reduced price, and to encourage the consumption of gas for fuel about a year ago a special rate was made. During the years that this public act this city fought for cheaper gas the newspapers generally were against the company and helped to agitate the demands of the people for lower rates.

**Columbus.**

Columbus, O., Dec. 8.—The Columbus Gas Company has been furnishing gas to the people of Columbus since 1889 for a thousand net. Previous to that time prices ranged from \$2 down to \$1.25, the latter figure being the price when the dollar rate was established. The reduction was brought about from several causes, popular agitation and a united stand by the newspapers of the city against the high rate being the principal causes. For two years previous to the time when the reduction was made the newspapers in Dayton and Toledo and other Ohio cities fought the high rate and succeeded in securing a reduction. Columbus entered the fight just as the differences in the other cities had been settled, and a bitter war started through the papers, each daily in the city joining hands and airing the amount of the enormous earnings of the company. Before the fight became fairly interesting the Columbus Gas Company reduced the rate from \$1.25 to \$1. The city thus returned the money if it fails to cure. 25c. Advt.